

REMEMBRANCES OF OLIVER

by
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Many of my memories of Oliver are just general images and feelings. I find it hard to come up with specific stories. If I could isolate myself for a while with pictures and others' stories of that time, maybe some specific incidents would come to mind.

I just know that a lot of my relationship with Oliver had to do with sharing our spiritual journeys, with their many struggles and questions. I always looked to him as a mentor in this area during the time on the Kobuk, and for some years after.

It seemed to me that the many of the skills he learned from his youth through his old age were always driven by his spiritual quest for the meaning of life, and specifically his place in it and man's place in general.

I believe that the things that made Oliver special to so many people were not just his skills and tools, but his passion to share all he knew and had with those around him. As the late Ray Courtney from Stehekin said of Oliver after he visited there, "He sure isn't selfish with what he knows".

I think that without that quality, Oliver would have been just another skilled craftsman who knew how to survive in the wilderness. But to some degree, that quality of sharing touched and changed all of us who ever knew him.

While my own spiritual journey has diverged considerably from his, I still value his basic quality of sharing what we have with those who are our friends and neighbors. Maybe someday I can recall something more specific that would better honor this man who made such a great impact on me.